

AROUND THE HOUSE

PRIDE IN



PUBLIC HOUSING

The Wichita Housing Authority is placing greater emphasis on how Public Housing tenants living in City-owned properties, maintain the exteriors of their homes. Staff will be strictly enforcing lease agreements to ensure that Public Housing tenants set a good example for other residents in the neighborhood. By following a few simple rules, the appearance of Public Housing developments can greatly enhance the appeal of **your neighborhood**, and that can mean a more pleasant environment for you & your family.

Public Housing staff will be conducting regular evaluations to ensure your compliance with the maintenance of your yard. You will be required to observe the following:

1. Trash dumpsters can sit at the curb for only **one day**. After the trash has been picked up, the dumpster must be returned to the side or rear of your house. Furniture
2. Your lawns should be mowed **at least once every 10 days**, or more often to maintain a grass height of no more than three inches. Grass should not be allowed to grow over the curb or sidewalks. It is your responsibility to remove tree saplings, weeds, and vines from fence lines.
3. Cars may never be parked off the driveway at any time! **Do not park in the yards.**
4. Barbecue grills, swing sets, bicycles, lawn furniture (except on the porch, and other fixtures should **not** be kept in the front

yard or in front of the house.

5. Automobile parts, oil and tires should not be stored on the property. They should immediately be properly disposed of. Driveways should not show oil spills and spots.

Yard should be free of debris and its appearance is your responsibility. Please notify Public Housing promptly if there are exterior repairs needed on your home, such as broken windows, torn screens or damaged down spouts.

In addition to asking our tenants to follow these expectations, Public Housing staff will be working on several projects to enhance the appeal of your neighborhood, such as sidewalk replacements and installation of new fencing in some locations.

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Housing and Community Services Department Mission

*... to provide housing
and related services
to benefit the citizens
and neighborhoods of
Wichita*

Milestones



The Housing and Community Services Department welcomes two new staff members to the Section 8 program:

- **Shaun Davis** is the new Family Self-Sufficiency Coordinator
- **David Laws** is the new Neighborhood Inspector.

Both come with great references and are prepared to 'hit the ground running'.

Public Housing Manager **Tom Byler** was recently featured in The Community Voice as the Featured Employee. This is how Tom described his seven years with the City in that article: "There is never a dull moment ... I learn something new every day and I have since I started." Congratulations Tom!

Section 3 Employment

Thank you for your great response to our invitation for you to be considered for employment under Section 3 of the HUD Act of 1968. All information has been forwarded to the Human Resources Department and as positions become available in your area of interest, you will hear directly from that office. If you have questions, call Anne Warren, Human Resources Specialist, at 268-4531.

From the Director's Chair

Mary K. Vaughn



Spring is around the corner and in Wichita that means it's time to start preparing the City budget. The Housing and Community Services department actually prepares two budgets: one for Federal funds (CDBG, HOME, ESG), and one for Public Housing and Section 8. As we prepare both budgets this year, we are facing new challenges.

If you've been following the national news you know that the President is proposing cuts in the funding that supports this department. One of the proposals will reduce Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding and

transfer the program from the Dept. of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) to the Dept. of Commerce. Another change which is being discussed is when CDBG is transferred, cities (like Wichita) will no longer receive a direct 'entitlement' allocation based on population and local needs. Instead we will have to apply for and compete against the whole country for this important funding.

That could have a big impact on programs such as home repair, recreation center improvements and summer youth employment.

In addition to CDBG changes, we continue to

worry about funding cuts in the public housing budget. Many Housing Authorities are laying off staff and terminating rental agreements with Public Housing and Section 8 clients because of proposed or actual cuts.

This budget picture is something which could have long term impacts on our community. Be assured that the City Manager and I, as well as the Mayor and City Council are working hard to save our funding!

Housing Department Construction Update

-Tom Byler

As most of you know if you've tried to visit our offices at 332 N. Riverview lately, we've been playing 'musical doors' as our contractors continue to work on completion of our office expansion project. We appreciate your patience and provide you with this exciting update!

We are nearing the half-way point in the construction schedule. The building's exterior walls and roof should be in place by mid-March. Completion is still scheduled for May, 2005, but we're all hoping for completion ahead of schedule.

This expansion is taking place in order to house Section 8 and Community Investments staff in a new 5,000

square foot building addition. The new office will provide more space for the convenience of clients and landlords, along with centralizing all Housing and Community Services staff in one building.

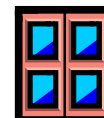
As construction proceeds, we ask that you continue to observe the entrance signs to ensure your safety. We promise you will find that all of this inconvenience will be well worth the wait when we cut the ribbon on our new office area!

Also, parents, please keep your children with you when you visit our offices. Do not let them run around the office as they disturb other workers and also may get hurt. Thanks for your cooperation.

Construction Trivia

We thought you might be interested in knowing what it takes to add 5,000 square feet to our building. This is what construction manager Joe Lotson estimates:

- 6,000 bricks
- 5,500 blocks
- 800 glass blocks
- 500 yards of carpet
- 20,000 pounds of stone



Spotlight on Family Self Sufficiency

- Gail Lotson & Shaun Davis

As mentioned in this newsletter, the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program has a new staff member. Shaun Davis was hired to fill one of the two vacant Coordinator positions.

Mr. Davis and Program Manager Gail Lotson are inviting all Family Self-Sufficiency participants to a meeting on **Thursday, March 31, 2005, at 4:00 p.m.** The meeting will be held in the **first floor Board Room of City Hall**. In addition to providing an opportunity to meet Mr. Davis, you will have a chance to provide feedback

on proposed topics for the 2005 FSS workshop series. There will also be discussion of program changes and review of responsibilities for participation in the program.

Attendance at this meeting is **mandatory** for all 148 FSS program participants. Space is limited so participants are asked not to bring children.

If you are unable to attend because of conflicts with work or school, please call Vicki Liguori at 462-3700 to explain your situation. The meeting will start promptly at 4:00!!

Attention FSS Participants

If homeownership is your goal, one of the things you need to do is ensure you have a good credit history. You can request your credit report annually at no charge on line or by phone:

www.annualcreditreport.com

Equifax: 1-800-759-5979

Experian: 1-888-397-3742

Trans Union: 1-800-888-4213

Bring your report to your next meeting with your FSS Coordinator for help in establishing a plan.

Air Conditioning Season—It's Closer Than You think!

- Wayne Fugit

As warmer weather approaches, it's a good time to perform routine maintenance on air conditioning units. Air-conditioning preventive maintenance includes:

- Keep outdoor coils clean for complete airflow and proper operation.
- Do not allow shrubs, leaves, grass clippings, or other material to obstruct the airflow to the unit.

Keeping the unit clean will not only increase its efficiency, but will extend the life of your equipment.

\$

Can You Use A Little Extra Money In 2005??



If you haven't filed your 2004 income taxes, it's not too

late to take advantage of the Earned Income Tax Credits and Child Care Tax Credits. To qualify you must meet certain requirements and file a tax return—even if you didn't earn enough money required to file a return.

Last year more than 21 million families with 2 or more children, received tax refunds up to \$4,300 under the Earned Income Tax Credit program. If you want to know more or if you need help with your taxes, contact the Volunteer Tax Assistance Program at: 1-800-829-1040.

Also, persons over the age of 60 can obtain tax filing assistance through the Tax Counseling for the Elderly program. Call 1-800-829-1040 or contact AARP at 1-888-227-7669.

CURRENT HAP PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Month	Mail Date
APRIL 2005	MARCH 29, 2005
MAY 2005	APRIL 29, 2005
JUNE 2005	MAY 27, 2005
JULY 2005	JUNE 28, 2005

Health Tip—Avoid Childhood Lead Poisoning

- Marty Miller

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment has a plan to eliminate childhood lead poisoning in Kansas by 2010. Why?

Lead poisoning in children can cause serious health problems which include learning and behavior problems, and can also result in seizures, coma and death.

Lead poisoning is caused when lead is eaten. Most cases occur when children eat chipped paint which contains lead, although lead can also enter children's systems when it is present in dust or dirt. Lead paint is usually present in older homes (those built before 1978).

Parents can protect their children

from lead poisoning by cleaning dusty areas of the home with a wet cloth and warm soapy water. In addition, a diet low in fat and high in iron/protein, calcium and vitamin C can reduce the lead the body absorbs. A diet that lacks these nutrients can cause the body to increase lead absorption.

Another thing parents can do is have their children tested for elevated lead levels. Tests can be performed by the Sedgwick County Health Department or the child's pediatrician. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment plans to launch a major campaign to educate parents and

community leaders about the importance of prevention and testing.

For more information contact the Kansas Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at:

1-866-865-3233

lead@kdhe.state.ks.us or

www.unleadedks.com





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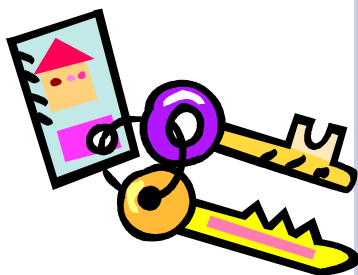
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www.wichita.gov/housing

Do You Want to Own Your Own Home?

-Mark Stanberry



If you have dreamed about owning your own home, contact the HOME program office at 462-3766 to find out how this might be a real possibility for you.

The City of Wichita has received funds to continue its **HOME 80** program. Over 700 low and moderate income Wichita residents have been assisted through this program, in the purchase of their first home. You could be next!!

This is an interest free deferred payment loan to help first time homebuyers overcome the need to have cash accumulated for down payment and closing costs.

In addition to helping with down payment and closing costs, the **HOME 80** program also provides assistance with

minor rehabilitation of the home in certain situations.

Homes must be located in the City's Redevelopment Incentives Area and homes can be brand new or existing. The City also provides funding to non-profit Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs) who are building new homes in the target areas. These new homes can also be purchased through the HOME 80 program!

Potential homebuyers will need to complete an application, provide income verification such as pay stub or social security or pension benefit letter. A copy of tax returns for the previous three years will also be required.

Because we know homeownership can be a frightening

experience, and because we want to ensure successful homeownership, eligible applicants must complete a FREE homeownership class in order to receive funds from HOME 80.

Application information and forms can be accessed through the Housing and Community Services Department website at: www.wichita.gov/CityOffices/Housing/.

You can also call our offices and information will be explained over the phone and/or mailed to you. Don't delay—funds will be awarded on a first come basis!